



POLICE
SCOTLAND

POILEAS ALBA

County Lines - CPC

DCI Craig Still – N Division – 10/06/25

WHAT IS A COUNTY LINE

- Home Office Definition of County Lines:
- County Lines describes gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs into one or more importing areas within the UK using **dedicated deal lines**. The methodology relies heavily on the **exploitation of children and vulnerable adults** to move and store the drugs and money. Often this involves **coercion, intimidation, violence** (including sexual violence) and **weapons**.

Practical definition:



N Division – County Line footprint

- Varies from 8 -10 lines
- Most lines have established networks
- Presence dependent on a number of factors
- Good intelligence links with exporting forces
- Regular enforcement



WAR ON DRUGS

Underworld crime gangs flooding Scots city with 'footsoldiers' to punt cocaine & heroin
DC Birse said the gangs are contributing to Scotland's drug death rates which are the highest in Europe

Stuart MacDonald

Published: 18:19, 5 Nov 2024

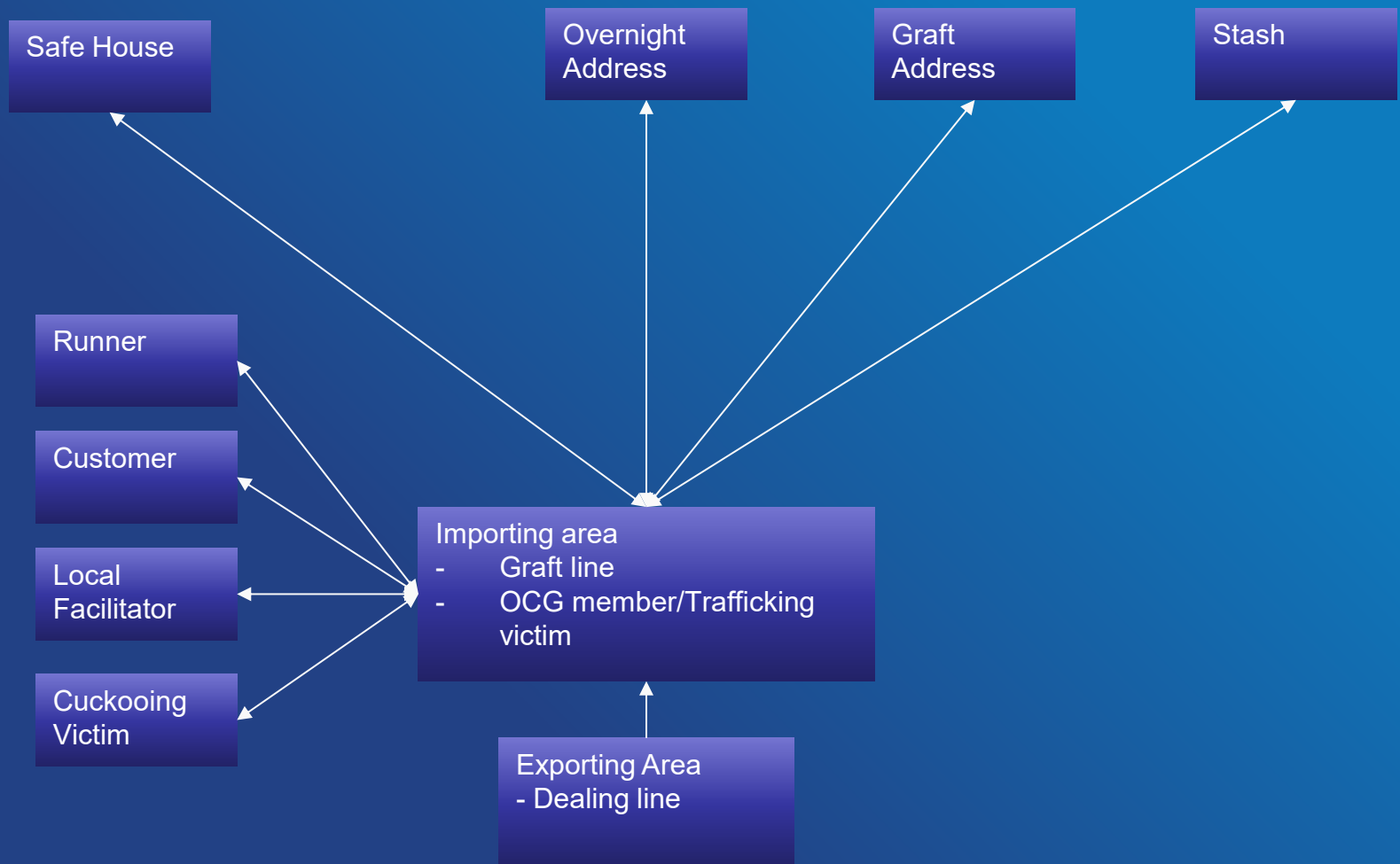


County Lines – Key Terms

- County Line
- Burner Phone
- Dealing Line
- Bulk Text
- Graft Line
- OCG
- Local Agent
- Facilitator
- Cuckooing
- Runner
- Exporting Area
- Overnight address
- Safe house
- Stash

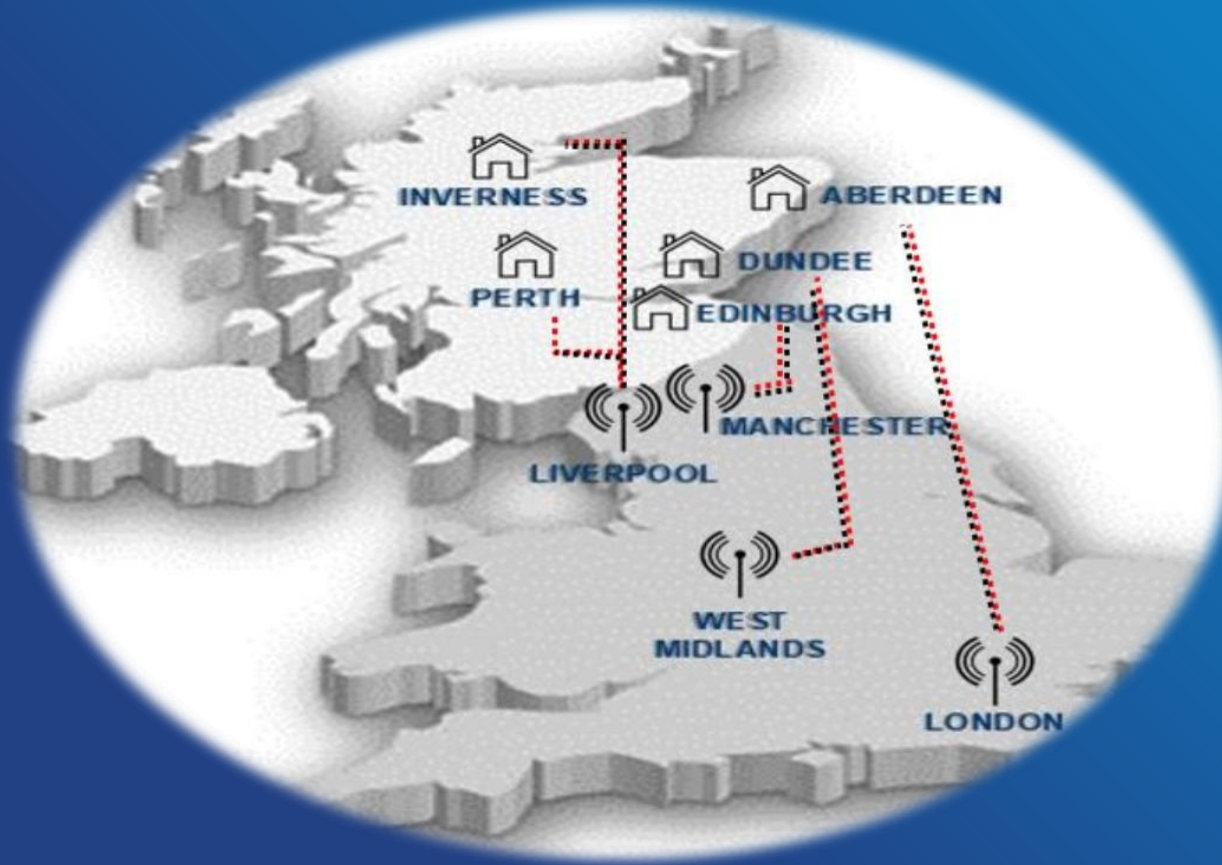


County Lines – Network



County Lines

- How does it work:



County Lines - Cuckooing

- The act of taking over a person's home by exploitation, intimidation or violence. The home then becomes a safe house to store drugs and/or a base to operate their drug dealing.
- Involves the exploitation of vulnerable people (poor mental health, learning difficulties, elderly, drug users/substance abuse, deprivation, socially isolated etc) and often repeat victims who have previously had other individuals take over their address.
- Homes can be used for days or even weeks before groups move on to another location, a tactic to avoid police.
- Victims may be paid or given drugs in exchange or evicted from their home by the groups. Some victims may be lured in by false affection and friendship.
- Victims are fearful about challenging the group members or asking them to leave.
- Victims may also be lured into 'running' drugs and/or being facilitators, such as booking hire vehicles/hotels etc, or their bank accounts used to move cash.
- Victims may take the fall from police enforcement, where they are blamed by the group and made to work off the debt of any drug or cash seizures.



County Lines

- Exploitation of Children and Vulnerable Adults
- Groups operating a County Line model will target children and vulnerable adults both in their local area and within N Division.
- This can include children and those vulnerable through disability or addiction to transport and supply drugs within the N Division area.



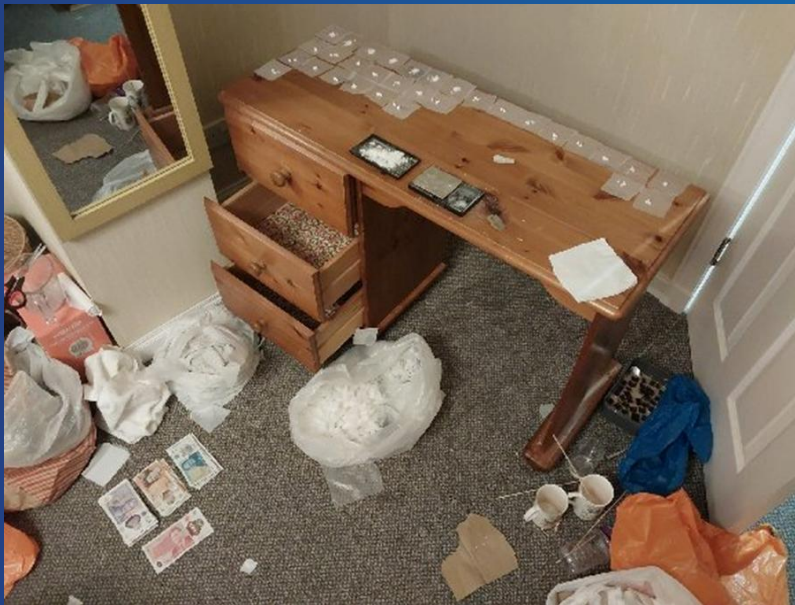
The Agent



- Tendency to be young males, late teens/early 20's
- Criminal background involving violence, possession of weapons, domestic abuse
- Hold the graft line in the N Division area
- Use public transport on most occasions to travel to/from the dealing area
- Use grooming type behaviour to build network in local area



The Facilitator



- Primarily female with established links to a number of groups
- Prison and/or care experienced with history of substance abuse
- Provide assistance to agents by arranging accommodation, runners, safe houses, posting of proceeds and collection of commodity.
- Careful assessment of vulnerability and exploitation vs criminality



The Cuckooing Victim

- Tendency to exploit vulnerable females
- Victims of physical and sexual abuse
- Care experienced
- Association with local facilitator
- Older males in community also victims of cuckooing
- Groups exploit loneliness, addiction and physical/mental vulnerabilities



The Runner

- Used to meet customers and reload from stash sites/addresses
- Previous exploitation of younger males in Inverness who have access to MotoX bikes
- May be drug users coerced into working on the group's behalf
- Provide agents for the line with opportunity to further distance themselves from police attention



Intelligence is Key

- Without intelligence and information we cannot effectively target CL groups and those at risk of harm.
- There are a number of ways of providing information to the Police.



Partners Intelligence Portal



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